# *The International Journal for*

# THE EDUCATION OF THE BLIND

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A Magazine for
Teachers and Parents of Visually Handicapped Children

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*The International Journal for*

# THE EDUCATION OF THE BLIND, INC.

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THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE BLIND

# The Atomic Dot

**By Paul J. Langan, Superintendent, Kentucky School for the Blind**

**Chairman of the Joint Uniform Braille Committee**

Braille has moved along on its merry way for the past twenty-three years with little interference except for the growth of some common usages and broad interpretations by various presses and transcribers. The latitude taken of THE STANDARD ENGLISH BRAILLE CODE has all been for the good, in the best interests of the readers, but in time has produced some rather odd inconsistencies, irregular practices and pronounced confusion in the books and magazines embossed in the United States. It seemed in order, therefore, for our two national associations to set up somewhat of a study group on this matter in 1950 to consolidate the best thinking of the braillists throughout the country. The Joint Uniform Braille Committee has attempted to revise the present code with reports of recommendations to the two associations during the past five years and is now delegated to proceed to negotiate with the British Committee with the aim of uniformity in our two systems.

In the fall of 1955 the Committee decided to use *The Reader's Digest* as a sounding board for readers' opinions on a matter proposed many times from the field. Unwilling to take these comments as being representative of a large majority of the braille readers in the country, the Committee secured the permission of the Publisher of *The Digest* to make a test experiment in that widely read magazine. In the September issue, Part I was embossed with complete omission of the capital dot wherever it appeared in the print edition. This meant, of course, that all proper nouns, pronouns, and names were written in lower case letters, and all sentences were started with merely the first letter of the first word, omitting the conventional identifying capital dot at the beginning. By way of explanation, an editor's note at the beginning of the volume informed readers of the project and asked for their reactions. Thus, the title of this piece; the capital dot, or dot six will now forever be known to members of the Committee, at least as THE ATOMIC DOT. It didn't take long for the storm to come! Now that we can emerge from the avalanche of mail, personal abuse and criticism, the story can be reported here. Again, however, it should be pointed out that this sampling was not the brain child of the Committee, but had been requested by many intelligent braille readers from every part of the country — teachers, doctors, lawyers, business men and women, and just plain average readers who felt that perhaps the extra cell involved might save enough space to justify the elimination and lend itself to more rapid reading. In theory this sounded logical to the Committee and certainly demanded verification.

The selection of *The Digest* was thought to give the widest cross section of braille readers of a common medium in the world. A sampling of one month would not be sufficient it was felt, so the plan was to repeat the test in three successive issues, using a compromise method the last time. Three different parts of the magazine were used in the experiment to offer the best variable selection of material embossed. Therefore Part I was published in September without capitals throughout the volume and Part II of the October issue was embossed in the same manner. The alternate method used in the November issue was to omit the capital at the beginning of sentences but to use full capitalization for proper nouns, pronouns and names.

Approximately thirty-eight hundred

copies of *The Digest* are embossed for readers of all ages throughout the world each month now, and it is estimated that through the process of passing on copies from reader to reader and through library distribution probably as many more braille readers enjoy each issue of this wonderful publication. With almost twenty per cent of the actual subscribers responding to the inquiry, the Committee feels the results are conclusive. However, many letters stated they represented the opinions of others in addition to the individual writer. The largest tabulation verified was the vote of an association, two hundred and forty strong. Other replies stated they voiced the opinions of friends, husbands, wives, and in two cases whole schools and their faculties. Each letter received was answered with a personal reply thanking the writer for taking time to cooperate with the Committee in this most important matter. The Committee was impressed with the interest and sincerity of the readers and the manner in which they expressed appreciation for having the opportunity to consider the problem of capitalization. It has always been the aim of the Committee to keep the wishes of the users of braille foremost in their thinking in attempting to make braille as easy and comfortable to read as possible. In more than ten meetings during the past five years, the Committee has never considered any proposal or suggested a change in braille which would in any way be confusing, less meaningful, or ambiguous to the readers of embossed books and magazines.

Happily the Committee reports here and now that in the foreseeable future no further attempt will be made to disturb the present usage of the capital dot as currently practiced by American presses. This decision has been by far the preference of the greatest possible reader poll probably ever conducted on braille. For the record, and for those who like and demand their statistics and figures, the following table is a partial listing of data gathered from the responses:

Replies were received from:

41 States
Canada
England
Mexico
South America
Philippine Islands
District of Columbia

Voting ran ten to one against the omission of the capital dot.

More women (8%) than men replied.

Greatest response was from New York (46) and California (42).

Most surprising reply was from the Director of the Department for the Welfare of the Blind, in Sheffield, England, who stated his people asked him to write that they preferred capitalization!

Strong protests were registered against any change in the American system of capitalization by three state associations and two entire schools and their faculties.

# Is Achievement Testing Practical In The Primary Grades?

By Samuel P. Hayes, Ph. D.

This is a brief report on a trial of the primary arithmetic tests of the new Stanford Achievement Test Series, Form J, by five cooperating schools. The article is based on a letter sent to participating schools.

The Kentucky Regional Conference on Testing for Teachers (fall, 1954) was taken as an opportunity to try out the Primary Arithmetic Sub-tests of the Stanford Achievement Test, Form J. Since then, results have been obtained from four other schools and two tables of combined results from these trials accompany this article. The data in the tables seem to justify the recommendation of a trial of the primary tests from the second grade upward. The following paragraph from the directions shortly to be printed at the American Printing House will implement the recommendation:

"Primary and Elementary batteries for testing blind children below the fourth grade are here offered for the first time. It is still an open question at what age or grade level we may reasonably expect to use group achievement tests involving the handling of braille, but preliminary trials with some of these tests in several schools indicate that *average* third grade children and *bright* second grade children may be expected to make a creditable showing. Contributions of results will be most gratefully received by the author and used to establish standards and make further recommendations".

This report deals only with the tests in Arithmetic Reasoning, in which there is a minimum use of reading and writing braille; and it would seem likely that pupils who can adapt themselves to this test, involving the use of a short pencil for marking answers, would also be able to take the Paragraph Meaning, Word Meaning and Spelling tests, (or some of them), thus giving the teacher objective evidence of achievement which can be compared with seeing standards at these grade levels. Directions for giving the Word Meaning test by the oral-dot sheet method provide for testing pupils who cannot handle braille comfortably, but who can learn to use a pencil.

The Arithmetic Games test consists of a series of eleven items of the familiar "following instructions" type, in which the pupils are asked to mark a sheet of tactual material. For item 1 the tester says: "HERE YOU WILL FIND FOUR RAISED LINES OF DIFFERENT LENGTH. LOOK THEM OVER AND DECIDE WHICH IS THE LONGEST LINE. PUT A FINGER OF YOUR LEFT HAND ON THE LONGEST LINE, AND WITH YOUR PENCIL DRAW A LINE ALONG THE EDGE OF YOUR FINGER SO IT WILL CROSS THE LONGEST RAISED LINE." For the second item the tester says: "HERE YOU WILL FIND A ROW OF BRAILLE DOTS. PUT A FINGER ON THE EIGHTH DOT AND DRAW A LINE THROUGH IT." For the fourth item the tester says: "HERE YOU WILL FIND A ROW OF BRAILLE DOTS. PUT A FINGER ON THE EIGHTH DOT AND DRAW A LINE THROUGH IT." For the fourth item the tester says: "HERE YOU WILL FIND SOME BRAILLE NUMBERS. PUT A FINGER ON THE LARGEST NUMBER AND DRAW A LINE THROUGH IT.'"

The Arithmetic Problems test consists of a series of 14 simple problems, which the tester reads twice to give the pupils plenty of time to think about them. Then the pupil is to write the answer on a braille slate. Item 1 reads: "WHAT NUMBER

COMES BETWEEN 36 AND 38?" Item 2 reads: "HOW MANY INCHES ARE THERE IN A FOOT?" Item 4 reads: "THERE WERE THREE BOYS AND FOUR GIRLS PLAYING IN THE SAND. HOW MANY BOYS AND GIRLS WERE PLAYING ALL TOGETHER?"

Tables I and II on pages 53 and 54 were arranged to give distributions of scores (number of test items correct) in the two parts of the test: A. Games and B. Problems. The horizontal lines were drawn at a score of about 50% correct, for comparative purposes. The schools contributing were:

1. Kentucky. 2. Michigan. 3. Minnesota. 4. Indiana. 5. Overbrook.

Kentucky was listed first and Overbrook last, as the schools in which such testing has been least to most carried on. The medians for the schools are used as a general indication of grade achievement, though a median signifies little with a group of 4 scores as in the case of Minnesota. But when the scores are combined in the "All" column they begin to take on significance.

Three of the schools gave IQ's for their pupils, and as there was a very obvious relationship between success in these tests and IQ, this is indicated by asterisk tallies for the scores for bright pupils. One can easily see that intelligence accounts for a considerable number of the high scores, general intelligence evidently being an important factor both in catching on to the test technique and in using a better store of arithmetic information. Similarly it is evident that a considerable number of the very low scores are from pupils with IQ's in the sixties and seventies.

### Table I. Fourth Grade.

Both tests are clearly too easy for a measurement of attainment in the fourth grade. In the Arithmetic Games test the two very low scores are from pupils with IQ's of 70 and 61, and the median for "all" is well above the 50% line. In the Arithmetic Problems test these same pupils get zero scores and there is an accumulation of high scores which invalidates the test at this level. If we had had even harder items we might have found still higher scores. And the median is far above the 50% line.

### Table II. Third Grade.

#### A. Games.

The distribution is about normal and the median is found at about 50%. The low score in Michigan was from a pupil with an IQ of 75.

#### B. Problems.

This test would seem to be too easy for the third grade, as the median for "all" is too high and there are too many perfect scores. Three of the low scores are from pupils with IQ's of 65, 69 and 75.

### Second Grade.

#### A. Games

Here the median for all is a bit low, but from what the principal said about his pupils, who by the way had never been tested in such ways before, it seems that many of the low scores are to be explained by low mental ability. As bright pupils did so well, (see asterisk tallies) it would seem that the test might well be tried in any school with an average group, or by simply omitting the testing of children known to be incompetent in general ability or in handling tactile material.

#### B. Problems.

This distribution seems to meet requirements very well: omitting the zero scores which may well be explained by low ability, the distribution is fairly like the normal, the median is at 50% correct, and most of the pupils with high IQ's (110 and above) are at or above the grade median. The differences between schools may be explained by differences in emphasis on arithmetic at this level, differences in the technique of instruction, or personal reaction

to a new test situation.

The author will be glad to hear from any reader interested to make comments. The new Stanford Achievement Test, Form J, is now available for order on quota from the American Printing House.

Table I. Preliminary Trials with Primary Arithmetic Tests, Stanford Achievement Form J, 1955

### A. Arithmetic Games

Grade 4

| School | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. correct | | | | | | |
| All 11 | | | M x** | | | x** |
| 10 | | * | | | | * |
| 9 | xx | xx | x | | | xxxxx |
| 8 | x | M xxx | | | | M xxxx |
| 7 | M xx | | | | | xx |
| 6 | xx | x | | | | xxx |
| 5 | xx | | | | | xx |
| 4 | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | |
| 2 | | x | | | | x |
| 1 | | | | | | |
| 0 | | x | | | | x |
| Number | 9 | 9 | 4 | | | 22 |
| Median | 7 | 8 | 11 | | | 8 |

*Indicates pupil with IQ of 110 or above in schools 2 & 3. Others not reported.

### B. Arithmetic Problems

Grade 4

| School | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. correct | | | | | | |
| All 14 | x | | ** | xx | xxxx** | xxxxxxx**** |
| 13 | x | * | M x | xxxx | Mxxxxxxxx | xxxxxxxxxxxx** |
| 12 | | xx | x | M xxxx | xxxxxxxx | M xxxxxxxxxxxxxx |
| 11 | | | | xx | xxxx | xxxxxx |
| 10 | xx | Mxx | | x | | xxxxx |
| 9 | M xx | | | | | xx |
| 8 | | | | | | |
| 7 | | x | | | | x |
| 6 | | | | | | |
| 5 | xx | x | | | x | xxxx |
| 4 | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | |
| 2 | x | | | | | x |
| 1 | | | | | | |
| 0 | | xx | | | | xx |
| Number | 9 | 9 | 4 | 13 | 27 | 62 |
| Median | 9 | 10 | 13½ | 12 | 12 | 12 |

*Indicates pupil with IQ of 110 or above in schools 2, 3 or 5

Table II. Preliminary Trials with Primary Arithmetic Tests, Stanford Achievement, Form J, 1955

## A. Arithmetic Games

| | Grade 3 | | | | | | Grade 2 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| School | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | All | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | All |
| No. correct | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All 11 | | | x | | | x | | | | | | |
| 10 | x | | | | | x | | | * | | | * |
| 9 | x | | M xx | | | xxx | | ** | * | | | *** |
| 8 | x | *** | x | | | xx*** | | | Mx | | | x |
| 7 | xxx | * | | | | Mxxx* | | * | x | | | *x |
| 6 | Mxx | Mxxx | | | | xxxxx | | M*x | x | | | xx* |
| 5 | xx | x | | | | xxx | x | | | | | Mx |
| 4 | x | x | | | | xx | xx | * | | | | xx* |
| 3 | | | | | | | x | | | | | x |
| 2 | | x | | | | x | M | | | | | |
| 1 | x | | | | | x | xxxx | xx | | | | xxxxxx |
| 0 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Number | 12 | 10 | 4 | | | 26 | 8 | 8 | 5 | | | 21 |
| Median | 6½ | 6 | 9 | | | 7 | 2 | 6 | 8 | | | 5 |

*Indicates pupil with IQ of 110 or above, in schools 2 & 3. Others did not report.

## B. Arithmetic Problems

| | Grade 3 | | | | | | Grade 2 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| School | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | All | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | All |
| No. correct | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All 14 | | | | xxx | x | xxxx | | | * | | | * |
| 13 | | | | M xx | x | xxx | | | | x | x | xx |
| 12 | | | | x | | x | | | | | | |
| 11 | x | | xx | | xxx | xxxxxx | | | | xx | | xx |
| 10 | x | x | Mx | x | Mxx | xxxxxx | | | | xxx | x* | xxxx* |
| 9 | x | x* | | | * | xx** | | | Mxx | xxx | Mxxx | xxxxxxxx |
| 8 | xx | * | | | x | Mxxxx | | | * | xxxxx | xx* | xxxxxxx** |
| 7 | xx | M** | x | x | | xxxxxx | x | ** | | x | Mxxx* | Mxxxxx*** |
| 6 | M | x | | | x | xx | | | x | xx | xx | xxxxx |
| 5 | x | | | | x | xx | | | | | x | x |
| 4 | x | | | | | x | | * | | | xx | xx* |
| 3 | x | | | | xx | xxx | | Mx** | | x | x | xxx** |
| 2 | | x | | | | x | x | | | | | x |
| 1 | xxx | x | | | | Mxxxx | | | | | x | x |
| 0 | x | x | | | | xx | xxxx | xx | | | x | xxxxxxx |
| Number | 14 | 10 | 4 | 8 | 13 | 49 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 18 | 21 | 58 |
| Median | 6 | 7 | 10½ | 13 | 10 | 8 | 0 | 3 | 9 | 8½ | 7 | 7 |

*Indicates pupil with IQ of 110 or above in schools 2, 3 and 5. Others did not report.

# Prepare For School Living

By Ruth Mitchell and Freda Henderson, First Grade Teachers

Tennessee School for the Blind

Residential schools for blind children are broadening their horizons. A much more comprehensive view of the school's responsibility to the child is the theme of teachers and educators today. Our contribution to the life of the child no longer waits until he comes to us at the age of six, nor does it end when he graduates from the senior class. Teachers are now interested in the total growth and development of the whole youngster.

Recognizing the unusual amount of remedial work and special guidance needed by so many beginners, primary teachers and houseparents have become thoroughly convinced that we must assume a responsibility toward the child during his pre-school years at home. Usually the parents have planned and looked forward with fond dreams for their child. But the fact that the baby is visually handicapped often comes with such a shock that all hope may seem shattered. Bewildered parents in such cases seldom have friends facing similar problems to whom they can turn for advice and help. This is the logical place for the school to step into the picture to make its interest evident by reaching these parents with some practical suggestions concerning the preparation of the child for school.

Working together from the first in the homes with the parents and the child will make the six-year-old look forward with normal eager anticipation to beginning school. Planning and cooperation during this early readiness period will put the young child well on the way toward happy useful living in both school and community. He will have experienced the all-important sense of security throughout the first years of his life. Whether through pre-school clinics, through home visitation, or through the study of literature and pamphlets, this is the message we wish to share with parents of a visually handicapped pre-school child.

### Security Through Love

Parents, relax! There is a bright and happy future for your child. There is a place of useful service for him to fill in the world. Others have proved it, so go ahead and dream your dreams for him. Love your child. Cuddle him. Play with him. Enjoy him just as you had planned. Throughout the first months every baby needs to feel secure in the warmth and love of his parents.

### Security Through Independence

Your baby will grow. His muscles will develop so that, like any child, he will soon learn to sit up alone, to walk, to run, and to play. Remember that the sighted child sees all the people and the objects around him. They arouse his curiosity and make him want to move about and explore. The child without sight will have just as much curiosity and just as much desire to explore, but he may lack the incentive. You can stimulate his interests by providing sounds and talking to him to encourage exploration of the room with his hands. He will discover shapes and surfaces pleasant to the touch. Safeguard your child, as you would any toddler, by removing extreme hazards. But always remember that any beginner gets many bumps and falls. Don't be disturbed if your child has them too.

Some parents have found musical push-toys helpful. The music encourages the child to walk, while the toy in front of him takes some of the bumps. There is no set of rules for every child. The important thing to remember is that, rather than waste your energy worrying about the things you think your child may not be able

to do, you use that same energy being alert to discover ways to help him learn to do for himself all the many things any child wants to do. Every two or three-year-old is proud of the things he can do "all by himself." Many of his accomplishments he learns through watching and imitating others. Your child will want to do things all by himself. It is part of growing up.

It is much easier for you to wait on your child, to anticipate and supply his every need. This indulgence satisfies the maternal instinct to protect, but it actually is a greater handicap to the child than his impaired vision. It may be easier to pity the child than it is to love him wisely, respecting him as an individual with normal abilities. But such pity is dangerous because it smothers the child's feeling of confidence and self-respect.

It will take a great deal of time and patience to help your child learn new skills. You may have to hold his hand and show him how to hold his spoon, his fork, the comb, his toothbrush — things the sighted child learns by imitation. He will have to explore each piece of his clothing to discover by collars, seams, or buttons, whether or not he has it the right way around. Give him plenty of time to experiment and learn by trial and error. But once he has found the right way encourage him to improve his speed so that he does not become a dawdler.

It is very important to the child that you help him to learn to feed himself, to care for his own toilet needs, including the proper care of his nose. He should be able to dress himself with the exception of difficult buttons, and to hang up his clothes. These skills will give him a sense of confidence and well-being when he enters upon the group experience at school. These skills are important, but more important is the desire to learn. Much more important is the feeling of self-confidence. The feeling that he is a part of the family and can do little chores about the home will give him a sense of importance and of contributing to the family group.

In order to assure success, it is necessary that the handicapped person be above the average in his will to accomplish and in his determination to persevere in spite of difficulties until the desired goal is reached. He must have the initiative and self-direction to seek the solution to the unique problems standing in the way of his achievement.

The foundation built by the parents in these early years is vital to these essential characteristics. The child must be encouraged to learn to do for himself and for others. He should be commended for real effort, even when he does not succeed, so that he will keep on trying and not become discouraged. Praise freely given for success will help hold him to his best efforts. Keep in mind that everything he does is not a miracle. Undue praise may develop within the child a feeling of false superiority.

### Security Through Friendship

The very little child is naturally self-centered. As he grows he needs experiences with people and places outside of his own home and family. Other children should be invited into the home so he can learn to share and understand the demands of others. He should be allowed to enjoy fun with his playmates in the freedom of the backyard, the sidewalk, and the community playground away from the constant supervision of his mother. He needs to become one of the group, to learn the give and take of play without a parent nearby to take his part. Close friendship with a pal will draw the child away from centering attention upon himself. This is the first big step toward community living.

### Security Through a Growing World

Take your youngster on walks around the neighborhood, for visits to the homes of friends, and for shopping trips downtown. Give him as many experiences as possible with members of the family outside the

home environment. Whenever practical, let him explore new surroundings with his hands. Talk to him about the places you are going and the things you pass. Call his attention to sounds and odors and explain them to him. All of this will help him to understand the trip and will arouse his curiosity for future learning.

Take your child to Sunday School—his spiritual growth is important. In addition to the instructions he will receive in his religious training, he will have another opportunity to become a member of a group of his own age working together under the guidance of an adult. His world is expanding. He follows group directions. He plans with a group, accepting suggestions and help from others and making contributions of his own to the group. He learns to feel secure with new adults in the absence of his parents. This is good experience in preparing him for admission to school later on.

These suggestions for parents are just a few of the many ways teachers, houseparents and school administrators can be of help to the parents of children with impaired vision. We feel that most parents will welcome this interest on the part of the professionally trained people who will later have so much to do with the proper growth and development of their children when they become of school age. The bond between the home, the school, and the community will be to the best interests of the child and will promote cooperation in the solution of his educational needs. Such a program will assure the integration of the young blind person into society as a happy, effective citizen.

## Perkins-Boston University Scholarships

Liberal scholarships, including full maintenance for an academic year of residence at Perkins School for the Blind, are available to well-qualified persons interested in training to become teachers of the blind or teachers of the deaf-blind. Candidates must be college graduates and preference in granting scholarships is given to persons with sight. Visually-handicapped persons will be considered if they have reasonable assurance of employment after training.

Credits earned lead towards a Master's Degree in Special Education or a Doctor's Degree in Special Education. All who complete the requirements for either course are eligible for the appropriate Perkins Diploma.

1. For Teachers of the Blind—Regular Session Courses: education of the blind; principles and problems (3); special methods in teaching the blind (3); student teaching in special education—teaching the blind (3-3).

2. For Teachers of the Deaf-Blind, Regular Session Courses: teaching of speech to the deaf and the deaf-blind with emphasis on the vibration method (3); teaching of language to the deaf and the deaf-blind (3); speech-reading and auditory training (3); education of the blind: principles and problems (3); student teaching in special education—teaching the blind, the deaf and the deaf-blind (6); education of the exceptional child (3); the science of speech (3); methods of teaching the deaf and the deaf-blind (3); seminar in speech and hearing (3).

3. Summer Session Courses: at Boston University (not required for Perkins Diploma). Education of the exceptional child (3); advanced clinical practice in speech and hearing (2-4); institute—education of the exceptional child (3).

# *Let's Pull All Strings* but - - *Stay Well-Tempered*

**By Anthony Cimino, Piano Tuning Instructor**

**Oklahoma School for the Blind**

If, after attending a conference, one takes time to do some hard reflective thinking, he should be able to do one or more of the following: (1) he should be able to make an honest and sincere criticism of the conference; (2) he should be in position to make some specific suggestions or recommendations; (3) he should arrive at some conclusions based upon some of the facts presented at the conference. It is our belief that the conference of piano tuning instructors which was held in October, 1953, at the Oklahoma School for the Blind and the 1954 AAIB Workshop for Piano Tuners held at the New York State School for the Blind presented a definite challenge and an abundance of food for thought to all schools for the blind.

It cannot be denied that the tuning profession offers a qualified blind man many excellent opportunities. Witness the number of tuners who have been successful in the field of private business or industry. A good tuner-technician is in an excellent position to step out into our competitive economic system and become a well-established and respected citizen of his community Today, more than ever before, the tuning profession enables the well-trained technician to realize financial gains sufficient to become economically independent and permits him to maintain a respectable American standard of living.

But true and complete success is measured by more than a yardstick of greenbacks and silver alone. The satisfaction of having won a warm spot in the hearts of your fellowmen and the feeling of having gained the respect of those in your community are beyond the realm of mechanical measurement. Knowing that he is in position to render some service to others gives the young tuner-technician a certain something that we can call "a sense of importance" and a feeling of security, for he realizes that he has a foundation on which to build. A young graduate who has completed a course in piano tuning has received a shot in the arm which gives a tremendous boost to his morale. It can prevent his spirit from plunging into the depths of defeatism and despondency and keep it on a high level of accomplishment, self-confidence, and self-respect. There is nothing more degrading, discouraging and disheartening to a blind graduate than the sudden realization that he is lacking some specific training so necessary to gain his bearings and make some progress in the sighted world.

If all this be true, let us examine our tuning departments in the light of these facts. It is true that we grant a tuning certificate to some students indicating that they are qualified to tune and service pianos for the public. But, how well trained are these students? This question can be answered only after we examine the space, equipment, tools, and supplies in our tuning departments. How many spinet model actions, complete spinet actions, and complete spinet pianos do we have in our shops? Let's ask ourselves the same questions concerning grand equipment and pianos.

Today, ninety-five per cent of the pianos manufactured are of the spinet variety. Why then, do we not have these instruments in our shops. The greatest part of the piano trade deals with the making,

selling, and servicing of spinet pianos. Why do we not train our pupils to go along with this change and definitely established trend? Many spinet pianos are now more than twenty years old and their owners are looking for good technicians to service these instruments. Why do we deny our pupils the opportunity of entering this market which could afford them so much? We are doing them a great harm by not offering the special training necessary to tune and service spinet pianos.

For the purpose of clarification and emphasis, let us formulate and state an hypothesis. Suppose a Miss Smith is asked to teach a complete twelfth grade course in American History to a class of seniors. Texts, references and other materials covering the historical development of our country up to the beginning of the First World War are available for the class. Information beyond that point is prohibited; materials and supplements are simply just not provided. It is obvious that Miss Smith cannot do a good job of teaching in such a situation. This is a fair comparison with a tuning department and a competent instructor without complete spinet actions and equipment. Spinet pianos are as important to a tuning department as a good, up-to-date textbook is to a history class.

Modern tools are also essential for students hoping to become proficient in the art of piano tuning and servicing. Many new tools are now available which require intensive instruction if the tuner is to become expert in repair work. The magazine THE BRAILLE PIANO TECHNICIAN will keep both the student and the instructor posted on the best appliances and equipment on the market today. These special tools are designed and manufactured to help the blind technician improve the speed and quality of his work and enable him to meet competition of sighted tuners.

All that has been said here concerning spinet pianos can be applied to grand pianos, equipment, tools, and supplies. In order to provide students with a complete and thorough course in piano technology, the training in the tuning, cleaning, regulating and repairing of grand pianos must be included as an essential part of any good course in this special field.

However, the best equipped tuning department is not the whole answer to the problem. Two other factors must be given consideration in this discussion: (1) the training and qualification of the instructor, and (2) the aptitude of the student.

Not all pupils are potential tuner-technicians. However, all students should have the opportunity of a try-out period to determine their ability. During this trial the instructor must evaluate each student in individual as well as group situations. In this pupil analysis, the instructor should observe and examine the following factors and traits which are so essential in the field of piano technology: (1) personality, including the physical as well as the mental traits; (2) general intelligence; (3) interest; (4) musical talent; (5) mechanical skills; (6) previous shop training; (7) time available in school for completion of the course; (8) health; and (9) hearing.

The results of these tests should be discussed with the Principal and only students able to meet the standards should be assigned to the program. Failures and dropouts should be the entire responsibility of the instructor. A pupil's deficiency in literary work does not automatically make him a potential candidate for the techniques of piano tuning. An incapable student will only be a burden to the class, wasting the instructor's time, tools, material and supplies. Conversely, the elimination of the misfits and the retention of capable and talented students will not assure a good course. Nothing can be substituted for the guidance offered by an instructor who is both an expert tuner-technician and a good teacher.

Tuning instructors not only should be

permitted but encouraged to maintain a clientele in the community. This enables the teacher to retain his professional skill and develop greater efficiency in a highly competitive field which is constantly changing. Theory put into practice will make a better technician. It is also helpful to the students if the instructor will bring some of his outside repair jobs to the school for demonstration purposes in class. Not all piano servicing problems occur in the music and tuning departments; nor can they always be created without serious damage to valuable and expensive equipment.

The piano tuning instructor must always keep in mind that he is primarily a member of the teaching faculty of the school. He will have the same students in his classes as attend courses of the other faculty members, and must, therefore, take into account that he and his course are a part of the whole program. Pupils will look to the instructor for proper guidance. The mere demonstration of a method or technique for the performance of a certain task falls short of doing a good teaching job. Teachers must recognize that they are dealing with individual personalities, and what may be successful with one boy may prove to be a complete failure with another. Each youngster presents a new and different challenge, a separate human being unto himself.

Tuning instructors must seek ways to grow professionally. Keeping abreast of the current literature in the field is not enough. Students who look forward to entering the field of teaching piano tuning should be prepared to meet the requirements of an accredited teacher as established by the state board of education. Though colleges do not offer degrees in piano technology, students can take related educational courses in a university program. Cincinnati Conservatory is one of the few schools in the country where certification in this highly special field can be obtained.

A great deal more could be written here on the many phases of the art of piano tuning. It is a highly technical skill requiring a fundamental course of training over a period of sometimes five years. To be able to offer such a course, a school should have a thoroughly trained, well-qualified and accredited instructor to head up a fully equipped department complete with modern tools and appliances, with emphasis on spinet and grand piano actions.

# *School Camping at the Michigan School*

**By James W. Graeff, Instructor**

**Michigan School for the Blind**

"Our students could never get anything out of camp," was the immediate reaction when it was suggested at a teachers' meeting that our school try camping. "They'd get lost." "Close supervision is the only answer." "What fun would they have?" "Who's going to plan it?"

As it turned out, there were dozens of other questions that needed answers before we were ready to board the bus for camp. We didn't know what headaches and what fun we'd gotten ourselves into when we decided that we'd at least *try* it.

*School camping* may require a little explanation. In many public schools in Michigan, classes have been taken to various state parks and recreation areas for several days to put into practice what they had learned in the classroom about conservation, nature study, outdoor life, and living together. It has proved to be a fine, practical way to liven-up classroom studies.

We made up our minds to go ahead. It was wintertime, and we wanted to go in the spring but many of the state recreation areas had already been reserved so we had little choice of locations. We were able to obtain an area not too far from school and the small fee per child made financing easy.

Four teachers went ahead to survey the facilities. They found a large frame building which would house twenty-six, complete with kitchen, two baths, a big recreation-dining room, and acres of outdoor woods and fields. There was a swamp, streams, baseball diamond, and outdoor cooking area too. The teachers felt the site was suitable for our project.

The next question was to settle who was to go. We intended from the beginning to limit the group to the elementary children, so the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades from both the braille and the vision center would go. The camp was reserved for seven days and the students divided into three groups, both sixths, both fifths, and both fourths. The sixth graders were to go for three days, and the other two groups each for two days. The teachers of each class were to go, unless there was an objection, in which case a substitute would be sent. No one refused. The arts and crafts teacher was also invited to go, and of course a cook!

Questionnaires were sent out to obtain parental permission and only one youngster was denied the experience.

A month before we were to go the excitement was high, and we felt we had not done any planning. Indeed, we hadn't. We had no idea what more needed to be done. We knew, though, that we couldn't just pack up the children and get on the bus and go.

One of the largest items to be considered was the selection of materials, foods, and utensils. It was easy to determine the number of meals for the seven days, so starting from there we estimated the quantities of food needed for each meal. Having made up the menus, we now knew the total quantity of food necessary for each group of campers.

Utensils proved to be a headache. The easiest way to decide the pots and pans to take seemed to be to go through a meal from the menu and determine each piece of equipment needed. By a process of adding now we knew the utensils needed and also found we could do some doubling up by having one type of pan or pot serve for different purposes. In spite of this, the first item we discovered we had left at school when we arrived at camp was a can opener! Large serving spoons, forks, paper towels, napkins, waxed paper, and candles all proved to be very essential items, as did the old rags we took for cleaning and other jobs.

The recreational equipment included balls, bats, craft materials and indoor games for rainy days. The art teacher selected a supply of leather, crayons, plaster, paper, clay, and tools. We neglected to take larger implements such as shovels which would have been useful for garbage burial and clearing of campfire areas.

Each student took his own bedding and clothing. The bedrolls were made up in gym classes the day before, consisting of one blanket and a sheet, plus clothing and toilet articles. We also took a box of extra blankets in case of cold weather and found them most welcome. Pillows were not taken. The teachers also took their own bedding, though none knew how to make a bedroll, much to the amusement of the children. No restriction was placed on musical instruments or sports equipment. Notations were made of the location of the nearest doctor and hospital, but fortunately we had no illness or accidents.

We had decided not to plan the days too tight with a firm schedule. It was felt that the children would express what they would like to do and a bit of experimentation would be necessary in this new

experience. Broad plans were, however, made for various morning, afternoon, and evening activities. The first afternoon was set aside for exploring the area and a hike was set up for the following morning. Small group activities were on the program for the second afternoon while the evenings were always spent around a campfire. Indoor games and story telling usually brought the night to a close. We did find it helpful to plan a broad program for each part of the day, however. Preparation at school, too, can make the nature hikes more meaningful to the children. In the weeks in class before the camp, the children can be given an idea of what to do, what to look for, and how to act in the woods. This pre-trip preparation will do much to assure success of the project. The students and the teachers should know what to expect.

With several staff members making the trip with the campers, it was possible to allow considerable latitude in the interests of the children. One group wanted to spend more time exploring, and eventually found a small stream where they could go wading. Others played softball, gathered fire wood, played on the swings, and helped in the kitchen. Everyone had something to do that was fun. Even the KP crew seemed to take on a sense of pride in the importance of their assignments.

A cook-out was planned for the first evening to give the children the experience of preparing a meal. It turned out that the staff did most of the cooking, however, for this can be done only in small groups. We felt the need of so many things we never thought of before we started out that we were convinced the secret of the success of such a venture is careful planning. Many problems came up which never had been considered, and learning by making mistakes is the hard way.

The children always enjoyed eating out-of-doors and they hung about the fire long after the meal was over adding more wood to delay the end of the evening. Planning for the evenings is necessary, too, for the children thought that camp was a good opportunity to stay up late and they found many excuses to postpone the bed hour. But we found that an evening of games, singing, and story-telling would usually tire out most of the campers and bedtime was always welcomed.

The children really liked the experience of camping. It was difficult to always please the whole group, but on the whole they had fun, and even now, months later they will say "Remember that time at Pickerel Lake when we. . . .? That sure was a lot of fun, wasn't it?" For some of the children from the city this was a first-time experience in the out-doors. They were really a little bewildered, but will be ready for the next trip for they now know what to expect. This was also a fine experience for children who are over-protected at home and presented them with a new situation which required some independent responsibility. Though such a project takes a great deal of planning and work on the part of teachers, most of them want to go again on the next trip. They felt they profited along with the children and learned more about the youngsters in a completely different and informal climate.

Take our advice — PLAN, and plan early! Prepare the children for the experience! Prepare the staff for the program scheduled and group activities. Above all, *have lots of fun!* All of us here at the Michigan School for the Blind have been asking, "When do we go camping again?"

# Scouting At The Maryland School

By L. C. Brandt, Scoutmaster

Each week the twenty-five members of Boy Scout Troop 710 of the Baltimore area meet at the Maryland School for the Blind. In their special Scout room on the campus of the school in Overlea, the boys do a thorough job of scouting with enthusiasm, energy and engrossing determination. Under the direction of the Scoutmaster they go through the regular routine of a Scout meeting, just like any of the other hundreds of troops meeting throughout the country.

The meeting usually starts off with a roll call and the boys forming four patrols. They work on projects to earn merit badges and perform the tasks required of all Scouts for advancement in rank. After an hour or more of Scout work they relax with games or singing before the meeting breaks up for the night. Or, they might decide to spend an hour or so in marching drills, for marching is where Troop 710 shines. And to prove it they have earned half a dozen awards in the three years since the troop was formed. The boys took top marching honors in the Veterans Day parade in Parkville, Maryland in 1954 and in 1955.

The Troop at the Maryland School has a committee of twelve assistant scout masters to work with them on their craft projects. Each assistant works with one or two boys to help them learn the scouting procedures needed to advance in rank. Some of the men who help as assistants are parents of children at the school, but the majority are just members of the Overlea community who are interested in scouting and in helping a student activity at the school. Two others are regular members of the school's teaching faculty.

The troop was chartered in 1952 at the suggestion of the father of one of the students, and the school's PTA group got behind the project and formed the troop committee. The participation of parents, local citizens and faculty members makes a well-rounded and interested group to help the boys and their Scoutmaster with the work of the troop.

During the summer months the boys who live in the city have informal meetings at a camp site they have cleared in a thickly wooded area on the campus. There they have the usual campfires and sleep in tents when the group stays overnight. The boys have made a number of trips, too, including a recent visit to the Andrews Air Force Base in Washington, D. C., where all the aircraft and equipment were explained to them by staff members stationed at the Base.

In addition to their Parkville parade awards, Troop 710 placed second in the district merit badge show in 1953; first place in troop standings at the blind boy scout Jamborees in 1953 and 1954, and third place at the Pittsburgh camporee last October. The Maryland boys will be hosts for this particular affair this year which will bring troops from schools for the blind in neighboring states to the annual October Jamboree.

Integrated by their own unanimous vote, members of the troop range in age from eleven to sixteen and in rank from tenderfoot to "on-the-verge-of" first class scouts. As the Maryland School has students from the states of Delaware and New Jersey, as well as the District of Columbia, the troop has a cosmopolitan flavor together with boys from all over the state of Maryland.

Scouting gives a wonderful morale boost plus a sense of accomplishment which means a great deal to the growth and development of a young boy. In addition to the enthusiasm and spirit such a group gives to the campus life of a school, the boys have fun in scouting, and the achievements and benefits are, therefore, manyfold.

# The Way He Should Go

By Josef G. Cauffman, Principal

Overbrook School for the Blind

There is the old story of the man who lived a life of confusion which was summed up by the saying, "He jumped upon his horse and rode madly off in all directions." To one who has now been in the field of special education for many years, it seems that at almost regular intervals parents, teachers, and agencies concerned with the blind gallop madly off in all directions. We are again in the midst of such an era.

The great increase in blindness among infants, due to either prematurity or the treatment of the premature after birth, has doubled or trebled the number of parents and agencies who in their desperation or eagerness to help, believe that in this modern age of scientific miracles there must be a final and new answer to blindness. They cannot see the main highway stretching forward into victorious adulthood. True, the highway is old. The Romans trod it. The religious orders of the middle ages mended it carefuly. The 19th Century resurfaced it. The 20th Century has added concrete, and beautified and landscaped its approaches and reinforced its bridges, occasionally straightening out a curve, thus shortening its extent, but ultimately, it is the path that each blind child should take. It's the way he should go. Its foundations are simple ones:

1. Recognition of the handicap by all concerned. Sentimental denial that it exists cannot change the facts; wasting precious years for rainbow chasing only robs him of the distance he might have made on his journey.

2. Acceptance of the handicap without maudlin or sentimental tears! The child has lost none of his humanity, none of his spiritual promise or vocational aptitudes. Acceptance begins to do something about the condition.

3. Education! At no age in history has education meant so much to so many. It is a truism to say that education is the cornerstone for any career, humble or great. Education must be broad; it must be thorough, and it must be aimed toward a goal. The goal is an integrated, happy, resourceful, able man or woman. Fortunately, there are many schools specifically established to do this difficult, special job. There are teachers whose lives have been dedicated to making possible the impossible, to taking the stone rejected by the builders and elevating it to the cornerstone, or seeing imprisoned in the block of marble the angel, and it is only in such surroundings where understanding knowledge and skill set the climate for development, that the blind child shut off from the world of sight, inhibited by an overly sympathetic public, and perhaps sentimental friends or relatives, can unfold his wings from the chrysalis and make his timid first flights into independence and manhood.

Much has been said and written regarding the bypath of integration with public or so-called normal school situations where he can compete with the seeing. This bypath leads to frustration, withdrawal from reality, and inferiority complexes. He has been placed among those who have been endowed by nature with easier and faster ways of learning. Their concepts are not his concepts, and those who would teach him, regardless of their concern and their desire to help, have neither the time nor the climate in which to achieve success. Some hardy souls win through to the end of this bypath and climb to success in spite of all that parents and friends have done to confuse them and delay their progress. Most,

however, "retire."

Another bypath not so frequently trod, but leading off at right angles to the road of success, is private help. There, lost in the shelter of home, amid timid lives of ease, their selfishness grows bigger and bigger in exact proportion to their world which shrinks and shrinks and shrinks. At the end of that bypath only sorrow awaits the blind child, for when his parents are forced by Father Time to leave, he is totally unsuited and unfitted to bear his share of the world's responsibilities.

There are many other bypaths; there is the bypath of state subsidy and pension which calls the student up the road of marriage or to a quick, easy job, not taking into consideration that the broad foundations, which provide for expression and development of the future and spiritual strength, have been left unfinished for a single moment of satisfaction.

For the parent or guardian there will be many moments of frustration and many of decision. The first impulse will be to keep the child under the protecting wing in the home. Yet normal birds must leave the nest and seek to learn in the world of experience. The blind child must also leave the home, but only for the understanding shelter of the school where experience will be encouraged rather than interpreted. Of course, sacrifices must be made by parents, but how comforting is the thought that time has indicated the way to the goal; that mentors are stationed at every bend of the road, at each foothill, and at each bridge. The little bypaths which may seem important; the side roads that beckon; the many maps provided by well-meaning, but uninformed, friends must be recognized for what they are: diversions from the main business of reaching the goal.

The way the child should go is up the straight, wide ancient path of knowledge — school, work, and responsibility, where he has learned along the way how to "meet with triumphs and disasters, and treat these two imposters just the same," and where at the end of the road he can say, "I am a man, fit for man's work." Parents seeing their children at that point can breathe a sigh of relief, for they will know with Solomon that a child trained up in the way he should go, when he is old will not depart therefrom.

*(Ed. Note: This article was originally published in the November 1955 issue of THE TOWERS, an Overbrook publication, and is reprinted here with the permission of the author.)*

# DATES TO REMEMBER

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| April | 10-14—ICEC National Convention, Minneapolis, Minn. |
| May | 10-11—APH-Library of Congress Braille Research Meeting, Louisville, Kentucky. |
| June | 24-28—AAIB 43rd Biennial Convention, Ohio School for the Blind, Worthington (Columbus), Ohio. |
| July | 8-13—AAWB 30th Convention, Los Angeles, California. |
| August | 1-10—Joint Uniform Braille Committee Meeting with British Committee, London, England. |

# Convention Year - - 1956

By Program Chairman, D. W. Overbeay, Superintendent
Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School

The 43rd Biennial Convention of the AAIB will be held at the Ohio State School for the Blind, June 24-28, 1956. The Ohio School is a completely new school built on a beautiful sit of over 100 acres. The facilities of the O.S.B. are ideal for workshop groups, general session, housing, recreation, exhibits, committee meetings and other business of the convention.

Mr. W. G. Scarberry, Superintendent of the Ohio School, has twenty local committees already planning for the affair. Every effort will be made to make this convention a worthwhile and profitable professional meeting for teachers and educators in the field of special education for blind children.

The Ohio School is located in Worthington, a suburb of Columbus, about 30 minutes by automobile and 45 minutes by bus from downtown Columbus. A large, modern suburban shopping center is but a few minutes walk from the school.

Reservations for the convention should be made immediately, as accommodations can be provided for only 225 at the school. Rooms on the campus will, therefore, be at a premium with a registration of 500 or more expected. Two excellent motels are located within easy walking distance, however, while others and hotels are available in the city.

Twenty-seven workshop groups have been scheduled in the following areas:

Arts and Crafts
Commercial Arts
Guidance
Homemaking
Houseparents (grades)
Houseparents (high school)
Industrial Arts
Kindergarten
Language Arts
Library
Mathematics
Mentally Retarded
Multiple Handicapped
Music I
Music II
Physical Education
Piano Technicians
Pre-School
Primary (grade 1)
Primary (grades 2 and 3)
Principals (grade school)
Principals (high school)
Science
Sight Conservation
Social Studies (grades 4-6)
Social Studies (high school)
Superintendents and Administrators

Seven other areas will be held in reserve pending registration.

One of the features of the convention will be consideration of the Report of the Policy Committee of the AAIB. This committee has been in the process of preparing this work for four years. AAIB members will receive a copy of the report by mail prior to the convention for study.

Other General Sessions of interest will include a panel discussion of "Travel Training for Visually Handicapped Boys and Girls". An authority in the field will speak on "Emotional Problems and the Visually Handicapped." The Convention will hear reports from the Joint Uniform Braille Committee, the Educational Research Department of the American Printing House for the Blind, the American Foundation for the Blind, the American Printing House for the Blind, standing committees, and workshop summaries.

# Regional Conferences

## Testing

Thirteen teachers and principals from Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, and Mississippi took part in a Testing Conference at Jackson, Mississippi on January 23-24, 1956. The program was patterned after the Kentucky Sponsored Regional Conference on Testing for Teachers held in Louisville in the fall of 1954.

Tests available for administration to the visually handicapped were considered after a brief general orientation to tests and measurements. Achievement testing was demonstrated in the several alternative methods adapted for administration using the new ink print manual of instructions. Portions of the New Stanford Achievement Tests, Form J, were administered to student subjects and the participants were given experience in scoring, tabulating, and interpreting the test results. The Interim-Hayes Binet intelligence test was demonstrated with a nine year old boy and the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children was used on a "possibly retarded" thirteen year old boy. Each test and case was discussed by the group after the demonstration.

Essentials of a complete and ideal testing program in a school for the blind were outlined for consideration and discussion. Tabulated data, charts, and graphs of test scores from the Kentucky and Perkins schools were presented as examples. Modifications of the ideal program were suggested for practical implementation where facilities are limited.

Interest, aptitude, and personality tests available for use with the visually handicapped were examined by the group. The limitations on administration and interpretation were pointed out. A conference library was available to participants and materials were distributed including an annotated bibliography of articles on testing the visually handicapped with information on the sources of the tests and materials.

Mr. John W. Eakes and the staff of the Mississippi School were excellent hosts, providing ideal quarters for the conference and southern hospitality to the participants. Dr. S. P. Hayes of Perkins joined Miss Duncan and Mr. Ashcroft in providing the leadership for the meeting.

**By S. C. Ashcroft and Betty Duncan**
**American Printing House for the Blind**

## Music

An Eastern Zone Music Workshop was held on October 21-22, 1955, attended by fifteen delegates from the New York Institute, the New York State School, Perkins, and the Oak Hill School (host). The meeting was chaired by Mr. James W. Hayes of the host school.

At the opening session plans for the Music Session of the forthcoming AAIB Convention were presented by Miss Grace T. Towsley of Batavia, Chairman of the AAIB Music Workshop. Two recommendations stemmed from a poll of all concerned:

1. That discussion of special problems be interspersed with aspects of the general field, motivated by outside speakers.

2. That inkprint copies of items proposed for embossing be brought to the Convention to facilitate on-the-spot selection.

Discussion of simplified embossing of music notation for beginners brought out a divergence of opinion over the omission of phrase and dynamic signs. It was recom-

mended that teachers transcribe some material, with deletions to meet the specific needs of individual students. Caution was emphasized here that the teacher be well qualified in braille music notation in order that the student would not be subjected to unorthodox methods or signs.

The child who plays by ear prior to reading should be allowed to learn occasional pieces by rote, with insistance on accuracy until he is able to learn by reading the embossed notes. This procedure would encourage the student's interest during the temporary slow-up learning period.

The present experiment in Note for Note was suggested as a compromise to uniformity of embossed systems, particularly as related to organ works.

Taped recording or original compositions by students for circulation among the schools was thought to be a method of incentive to other potential composers. Regional Music Festivals were advocated by the group for off-convention years, with set numbers for massed chorus, and optional solo items for performance.

Interesting by-products of the meeting included a tour of the Austin Organ factory in Hartford; recordings by the New York Institute Chorus; and the first hand account by a music major blind college student of his practice-teaching in an elementary school for the sighted, with taped recordings of his class demonstrations.

By Grace T. Towsley, New York State School for the Blind, and Harry J. Ditzler, New Mexico School for the Blind

## *Language Arts*

Continuinng the supplementary literature project begun two years ago, the Language Arts Workshop of the A.A.I.B. met on October 14-15 at the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children in Pittsburgh. Discussion began with possible solutions to the difficulties of obtaining copyrights on material to be included in graded anthologies for English classes. Various members also stressed the necessity for objectivity, high quality, and consideration of degree of difficulty in the choice of materials. As a corollary project, several high school instructors presented vocabulary lists on the secondary level, recommending that these lists be brailled.

Mr. Anthony Ackerman (Perkins), Chairman, proposed that editing was the next function of the group. The conclusion reached provided for obtaining a final check on contents for each grade from all schools, securing complete copyright data, and editing the contents for presentation at the June A.A.I.B. Convention in Worthington, Ohio.

After two workshop sessions, there followed a general meeting in which the group formed final plans for compiling graded lists to be mailed to the schools by November 15, 1955, accompanied by an explanatory letter.

The workshop concluded on an optimistic note of fulfillment of the long-cherished hope of having sufficient background literature for blind students of English.

By Frances Young, Teacher Maryland School for the Blind

# Workshop For Teachers Of Slow Learning And Mentally Retarded Blind Children

By Francis M. Andrews, Superintendent

Maryland School for the Blind

On November 4-5, 1955, a workshop for teachers of slow learning and mentally retarded blind children was held at the Maryland School for the Blind. Teachers of mentally retarded children in the public schools of Baltimore were also invited. About seventy persons attended the two-day session, coming from Overbrook, New York Institute, New York State School for the Blind, Connecticut, Royer-Greaves School, North Carolina School for the Blind, and the Maryland School for the Blind, with representatives from Rosewood Training School, Searchlight Training Center, School of the Chimes, Fernald State School in Massachusetts and the public schools of Atlanta, Georgia.

Dr. Harold A. Delp, Co-ordinator of Educational Activities at the Training School at Vineland, New Jersey, was the speaker for the opening session. Dr. Delp reminded the group that the retarded child is first a human being and must be treated as an individual. He believes that teachers should first learn why a particular child is retarded. Dr. Delp pointed out that the I.Q. frequently changes, and when used alone does not give a true or complete picture of what the child can do or cannot do. A good psychologist can point out the factors involved in the results of tests and interpret these to the teacher. He should be able to advise just what type of training is best for the child. Dr. Delp feels that both the psychologist and the teachers must have an understanding of the home environment of the child to make recommendations which will be helpful to him when he returns to his home community. Adequate mental testing was advised for each individual case, together with some measurement of social, emotional, and physical maturity followed by a thorough physical examination for factors which might be involved. A good case history must be available to the worker.

On the second day of the conference, two groups were formed, one for those interested in older children and the other for teachers of the younger child. It was interesting to note that in both of these groups there were teachers of the severely retarded child.

Those concerned with the older students discussed whether or not one should try to teach all of these children braille or reading. It seemed necessary to first decide what the primary considerations are to be and how much pleasure, as well as understanding, the pupil will get from his reading. It was pointed out that one should take the child with the hope that some day he will be able to assume his place in the home community. The family, too, must be educated as to what the child can do. Making these youngsters happy will many times bring out the things in which they are interested and can do best. The group discussed at some length the many crafts of benefit to these children, and the social life within the day class or the residential school program were compared and brought out many advantages to the child in either situation.

Those who work with the younger child found there were a variety of methods to stimulate and encourage the pupil. Six important points were listed in this area:

1. Progress with a retarded blind child may be slower than with a sighted retarded child. Visual association is one of the

important factors to the understanding and learning for a retarded child.

2. A person's voice is very important to the blind child whether he is retarded or not.

3. A certain amount of helpful cues can be derived from observation of the child in his work and play.

4. Some learning can be more meaningful to a slow child if he is helped by another child.

5. A child has to feel the need before actual learning can take place. There can be stimulation from his teacher toward the feeling for this need, but it must be subtle and without pressure, for the child must feel that the need comes from himself.

6. Many times a slower child's needs have been anticipated too much, thus slowing up the development of his ability to express himself.

The group felt a seventh topic could be included in their summary, the three "A's" as expressed by Dr. Kanner: Acceptance, Affection, and Approval.

During the final session the two groups came together to present their ideas. Some of the subjects for their study are:

1. Need for determination of our philosophy in dealing with retarded children.
2. Establishing of goals and principles.
3. Methods and materials defined which would enable teachers to meet these goals in actual practice.

This initial conference merely outlined the beginning of the approach to this most important phase of education, and the participants left the meeting with much food for thought.

In the business meeting Miss Elinor Long of the Royer-Greaves School was elected chairman of the group. She was instructed to see that provisions are made for a workshop for teachers of the retarded blind child at the coming convention of the AAIB in June at Worthington, Ohio. The chairman immediately assumed the duties of planning for the next conference and assured the group of an outstanding authority in the field of mental health as speaker at the AAIB workshop.

# When Should Braille Be Taught?

**By Hattie Jiggetts, Hunter College Student**

Two major factors must be considered when deciding to begin braille with a blind child. The first of these is the child's readiness for formal education. The second is the extent of blindness in case the child is not totally blind, and what can be expected from the child by learning through useful vision.

Since braille is the medium or tool for learning to read and write for the blind child, the approach to the time and methods of teaching it has many of the same requirements that are necessary for teaching reading and writing to the fully sighted child. Blindness, however, requires much more time in pre-readiness preparation .

The social and personal adjustment of the young blind child is most important. In the at-home pre-school period the blind child should be taught to walk and talk

and learn the same things as his brother and sister did at the same age. He should not only be able to care for himself, but should be trained to have some responsibilities in the home. When he begins his school experience he will have to live and work with other children, so it is important for him to have daily play periods in and out of the home with other children.

Since the blind child must rely to a large extent upon his tactile and auditory experiences, he will miss many of the observations of a seeing child. The teacher must be certain to offer a broad program of experiences if the teaching of braille is to be successful. The teacher will be challenged in arousing the child's curiosity to the areas beyond his immediate reach.

The pre-readiness program for the blind child must include methods of supplying a variety of experiences. The length and content of this work must be determined by the maturity or immaturity of the child or the group. The child should in the very beginning be made acquainted with the immediate surroundings of his new environment. It should be pointed out here that the teacher will encounter wide gaps in the blind child's understanding. The child should be given the opportunity of exploring his classroom—finding the door, windows, furniture and equipment. He must learn how to operate and use the facilities. From the classroom, his experiences should move on to the playground, the drinking fountain and other rooms and places which he needs to know about. Care should be exercised in presenting only one experience at a time.

The next important step is to develop the ability of the child to use his hands. There are a variety of exercises for this tactual development and many games and puzzles which may be used. Collecting and matching samples of fabrics, ranging from heavy textures to smooth satins, are helpful. Plastic paints may be used in forming raised lines or shapes of drawings or pictures the child will find interesting. Playing with toys requiring coordination of the large muscles will be of great benefit in the physcial development of the child's growth. Stringing beads and buttons, reducing the size of the objects as the child masters each task, will bring about good manual dexterity. These hand exercises also help the child to learn to follow directions and interpret patterns.

The child should learn to understand and enjoy stories and poems. He soon can memorize simple poems and songs and be able to tell the stories read to him. The teacher should have access to a good source library in order to create an interest and pleasure in reading. The youngster should supplement the stories by recalling his own experiences and relating events in the order of occurrence.

The degree of blindness is also a very important factor in determining the proper time for beginning braille. In cases where there is less than total blindness, care must be exercised in distinguishing between the partially-sighted and the partially-blind. It has been recommended that partially-sighted children—those whose vision is 20/200 to 20/70 on the Snellen Chart and whose conditions is not expected to deteriorate severely—be educated by methods used in a sight-conservation class. The partially-blind—those whose vision is less than 20/200 with an unfavorable prognosis—should be educated in special schools or classes by methods used in educating the blind. Since the partially-blind child has some useful vision he can be given an acquaintance with all media and at the same time be taught to utilize wisely the vision he does have. Dr. Frampton, in his book, EDUCATION OF THE BLIND, recommends starting the blind child's education with the learning of reading and writing braille before other work for the partially-blind is presented.

In summary, teachers will find that the

pre-readiness reading material now available will be most helpful in preparing the beginning blind child for the mastery of braille reading and writing. The alert teacher will soon recognize many expressions of interest and ability in the child which will enable her to determine the proper time to begin the teaching of braille.

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